

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 3, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write today to request your urgent action in declaring a national disaster for California's mountain areas should such a request be made by California Governor Gavin Newsom. Over the past several days, California has experienced an unprecedented surge of winter storms that have engulfed the state, spanning the San Bernardino, Sierra Nevada, and San Gabriel Mountains. The magnitude of these weather systems has placed a severe strain on our state and local governments' ability to swiftly respond and protect public health and safety.

Over the past week, historic winter storms have resulted in a multitude of collapsed buildings, stranded or trapped residents and visitors, blocked roads, and have left thousands of homes and businesses without electricity or access to critical lifesaving resources including fuel, medications, doctors, and even basic necessities such as groceries. In the remote community of Crestline, residents are facing increasing numbers of collapsing roofs on homes and businesses due to the weight of the snow, and the collapse of the roof on the local grocery store has brought food supplies to dangerously low levels. Access to local critical infrastructure such as wastewater treatment has also been cut off in places, risking further catastrophe.

Wednesday night, California Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency for 13 counties, including Amador, Kern, Los Angeles, Madera, Mariposa, Mono, Nevada, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Sierra, Sonoma, and Tulare. While this action has provided additional resources to residents such as an emergency hotline and a shelter for those who are stranded away from their homes, more assistance is urgently needed, including additional snowplows, crews, equipment, medical supplies, and emergency support for food stores and medical care.

We are grateful for the work of our first responders, search and rescue crews, and state and local agencies who have been working tirelessly to clear access to key routes and provide assistance to those in immediate danger. It is critical that federal resources are ready and able to act quickly to supplement state and county efforts to help these communities regain access to food and medical care, rebuild damaged buildings and homes, assist small businesses forced to close, and avert further catastrophe.

Should the state of California seek a federal disaster designation, we ask that your administration grant the request immediately to add federal assets and resources to these critical recovery efforts. Doing so will help to ensure that these threats to public health and safety are appropriately managed and mitigated. Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue. We look forward to working with you to address the many needs of these mountain communities.

Sincerely,



Jay Obernolte
Member of Congress



Kevin Kiley
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



John Duarte
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock
Member of Congress



David G. Valadao
Member of Congress



Mike Garcia
Member of Congress